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BACKGROUND

The 2004 Upper Westside Livable Centers Initiative Study is a guide for public and private investment in a two square mile study area within the Northwest quadrant of the City of Atlanta. The plan assesses area needs, interests, and opportunities with input from a series of interactive public workshops, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and committee meetings. The strategies identified in this plan reflect the community's vision for housing, economic development, transportation, land use and zoning, urban design and area character, and real estate development.

LCI PROGRAM

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) administers the Livable Centers Initiative as a regional effort to encourage diverse housing opportunities, mixed uses, and multiple mobility choices. The program also sets priorities for future transportation improvements in participating jurisdictions, while promoting the following specific goals:

1. Encourage a diversity of medium to high-density, mixed income neighborhoods, employment, shopping and recreation choices.
2. Provide access to a range of travel modes including transit, roadways, walking and biking to enable access to all uses within the study area.
3. Encourage integration of uses and land use policy/regulation with transportation investments to maximize the use of alternate modes.
4. Increase the desirability of redevelopment of land served by existing infrastructure at transit stations, corridors, activity, and town centers through transportation investments.
5. Preserve historical characteristics and create community identity.
6. Develop a transportation investment program that reflects community needs.
7. Provide transportation infrastructure incentives for jurisdictions to implement the resulting study goals.
8. Provide for the implementation of regional quality growth policies and Best Development Practices in the study area.
9. Develop a local planning outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders, particularly low income, minority and traditionally underserved populations
10. Provide planning funds to integrate land use policies and transportation investments with urban design tools.

The Upper Westside LCI plan draws overall guidance from the goals set by the ARC and refines them with the community specific goals that are found in the Vision and Goals section of this report.



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PLANNING PROCESS

Plan development revolved around five sets of public meetings (See **Appendix A – Public Participation**):

- ☐ Kick-Off Meeting
- ☐ Planning Charrette
- ☐ Draft Presentation
- ☐ Open House
- ☐ Final Open House

The planning team introduced existing conditions, along with initial opportunities and constraints at the Kick-Off meeting in September 2004. The public had an opportunity to suggest additional issues to be studied and to participate in a character image survey that identified the desired type and form of possible development, open space, and transportation improvements in the study area.

Stakeholders more fully explored issues and opportunities affecting transportation, neighborhoods, private property, real estate development, open space, and non-profit organizations as part of a series of focus groups conducted before the Planning Charrette.

The Planning Charrette in October 2004 created a forum for various stakeholders to take a ‘hands-on’ role in the urban design of the study area. The charrette began with a visioning exercise to refine the overall LCI goals for the Upper Westside. Participants divided the Upper Westside into smaller character areas and expressed the unique characteristics of these areas. Stakeholders also used base maps to identify land uses, open space and greenway opportunities, and mobility links.

The planning team used feedback from the charrette along with further analysis of current conditions and foreseeable opportunities to develop concepts for transportation, transit, open space, pedestrian improvements, future land use, and urban design.

In the Draft Presentation of November 2004, the planning team presented a Vision Plan that broadly outlined the goals and major implementation strategies intended to shape the future of the Upper Westside.

The Open House in December 2004 allowed stakeholders to see how their input and work throughout the planning process translated into detailed proposals and priorities for action. At the Final Open House in January 2005, participants had the opportunity to voice their formal support for plan recommendations.

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PLANNING TEAM

The **Project Management Team** consisted of the consultants and city staff. This team met before each major public meeting to ensure the planning process maintained direction and addressed the appropriate issues at each stage of the study.

The **Advisory Committee** consisted of a cross-section of stakeholders representing neighborhood, business, developer, and non-profit interests. The Advisory Committee previewed materials for public meetings to ensure that materials reflected the interests of community stakeholders during the planning process.

The **Focus Groups** consisted of members of the public expressing an interest in a given topic, along with specially selected decision makers. These groups brought additional detail to the analysis of key issues.

The **City Resource Team** consisted of other City staff from Zoning, Transportation, Public Works, and the Parks and Open Space. This team provided professional comments and input for study recommendations and reviewed major plan documents including reports and maps.



STAKEHOLDERS DISCUSS PLAN AT DRAFT PRESENTATION MEETING.



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STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION

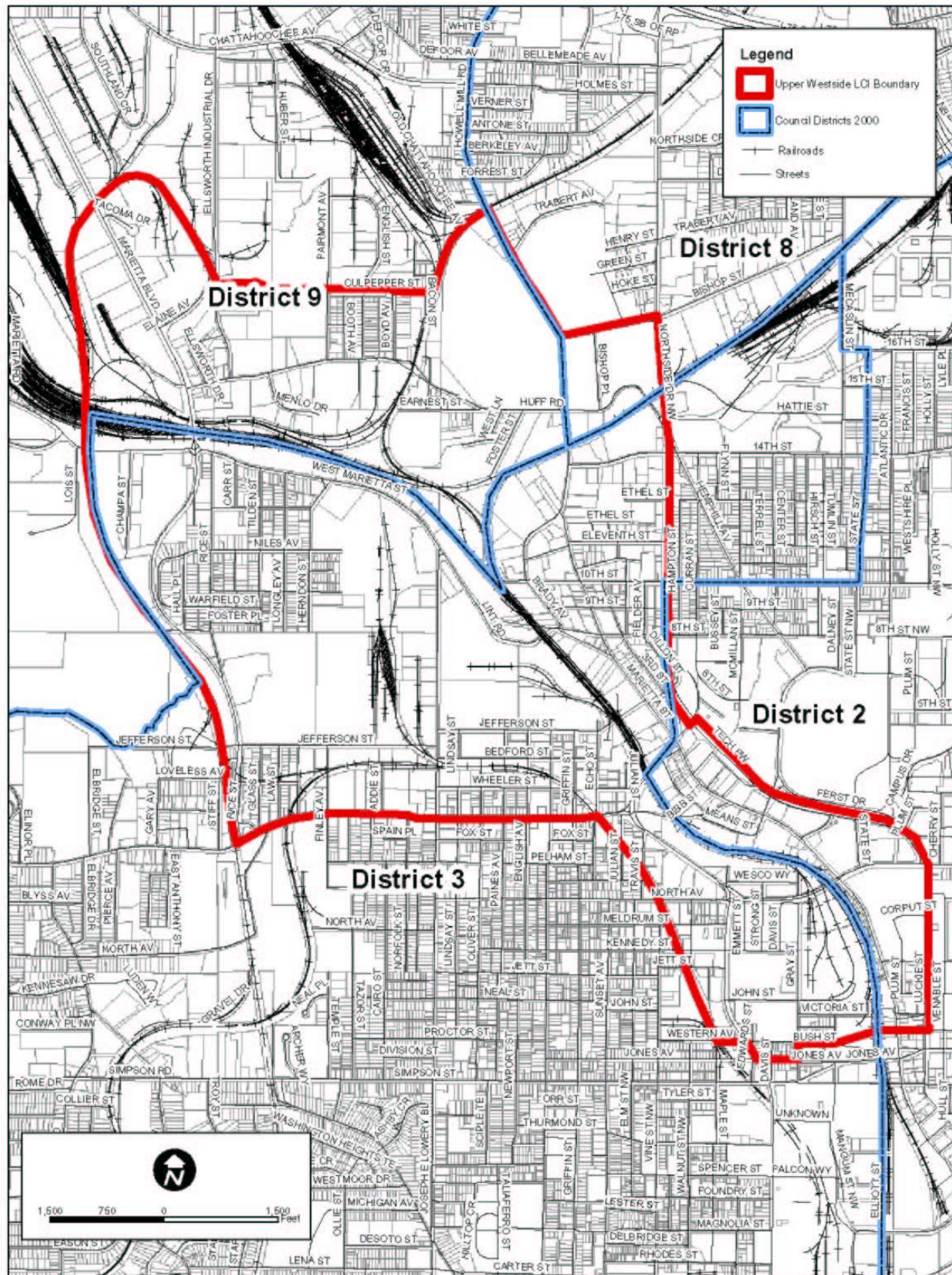
The Upper Westside consists of approximately 1,400 acres organized mainly around the corridors of Marietta Street, Howell Mill Road, and Northside Drive. The study area reaches north to the Atlanta Waterworks; south to the Georgia World Congress Center, east to Georgia Tech; and west to include the neighborhood of Howell Station. The south end of the study area includes the major east-west arterial of Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway (formerly Bankhead Highway). Several rail corridors cross through the study area with a major rail line running northwest from downtown to Inman Yard.

As shown in Figure 1, the study area includes portions of five Neighborhood Planning Units: D, E, K, L and M. It also encompasses or is adjacent to a number of traditional neighborhoods, including Howell Station and Knight Park, Home Park, Blandtown, and Underwood Hills. City of Atlanta representation comes from Council Districts 2, 3, 8 and 9 (see Figure 2).

FIGURE I – STUDY AREA NEIGHBORHOODS AND NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING UNITS



FIGURE 2 – STUDY AREA CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS





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As discussed in more detail in the Issues and Opportunities section, the southern portion of the Upper Westside falls within the City of Atlanta's designated Westside Community Renewal cluster, elevating the area to priority status for planning and economic development initiatives. The southern portion of the study area is also within Westside Redevelopment Plan and Tax Allocation Bond District. (See Figures 15 and 16 in the Issues and Opportunities Section) The New Century Economic Development Plan for the City of Atlanta also identifies the Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway corridor as one of six priority development areas.

FIGURE 3 – STUDY AREA AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH



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PREVIOUS AND ONGOING PLANNING EFFORTS

Several recent and ongoing planning efforts directly influence opportunities within the Upper Westside study area.

Inner Core Transit Study (2004-2005) – MARTA is conducting a study of possible new transit routes including the ‘Beltline’ route and the C-Line route. Several Beltline alignment options travel through the western or central portions of the Upper Westside. One of the proposed C-Line routes would travel along Northside Drive in the study area. The current phase of the Inner Core Transit Study will identify a locally preferred alternative for the route and the transit technology to be used for the new line.

Northwest Connectivity Study (2004) – The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) examined options for improving transportation connections among activity centers within the I75/US41/CSX Railroad corridor, including Midtown Atlanta on the south, through the Cumberland Galleria area and up to Town Center on the north. As part of Phase II of the study, GRTA conducted additional analyses to develop projects for key arterial highways with a focus on Marietta Boulevard; Atlanta-Bolton; Atlanta Road; Bolton-Cumberland; South Cobb Parkway; Cumberland-Marietta; and Northside Drive: I-75-Atlantic Station.



ATLANTA BELTLINE GREEN
SPACE CONCEPT

Atlanta Beltline Tax Allocation District Feasibility Study (2004-2005) – The Atlanta Development Authority is conducting a study to determine how a Tax Allocation District (TAD) could fund greenway or transit improvements along the proposed Beltline route. This study will provide information on the feasibility of a Beltline Tax Allocation District and the possible impact of the Beltline in spurring new development.

Northside Drive Corridor Study (2004) – This ongoing study by the City of Atlanta will identify strategies to enhance transportation, land use, and urban design conditions along the entire Northside Drive corridor and its intersecting streets from I-20 to I-75.

Georgia Tech Master Plan (2004) – Georgia Tech is expanding its campus and developing several new buildings along Marietta Street. The focus of the new Georgia Tech Master Plan is to create a living campus, with 24 hour activity, and a more pedestrian- and transit-friendly environment.

Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway Redevelopment Plan (2003) – The Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway Redevelopment Plan studied an approximately five-mile stretch of the parkway from Stiff Street (to the east of the Bankhead MARTA Station) west to the Chattahoochee River, marking the city’s boundary. The plan guides commercial redevelopment into concentrated nodes along the corridor and attempts to link these commercial nodes to adjacent neighborhoods with pedestrian entries, urban plazas, and ground-floor retail. Economic development focuses on meeting existing community needs and promoting community-based economic growth.



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Moore's Mill/Bolton Road LCI Study (2003) – This study identifies a major redevelopment opportunity at the intersection of Marietta Boulevard and Moore's Mill Road. The plan also recommends a new transit route along Marietta Boulevard.

JSA-McGill LCI Study (2003) – This plan recommends transportation and pedestrian improvements for the east-west corridor currently connected by Jones, Simpson, and Alexander, along with new high density housing to complement the Georgia Aquarium and the World of Coca Cola developments.

Greater Home Park Master Plan (2002) – The neighborhood of Home Park lies partially within the Upper Westside study area. The Home Park Master Plan promotes a vibrant, mixed use community in the area between Northside Drive and Brady Avenue and identifies a key focal point at the intersection of Northside Drive and Hemphill Avenue.

Northwest Atlanta Framework Plan (2000) – The Northwest Atlanta Framework Plan is a wide-reaching study addressing urban design, land use, economic development, housing, real estate markets, and city policy in the Northwest area of the city. Key recommendations include setting aside areas for a healthy industrial economy, mixed use redevelopment along key corridors such as Howell Mill and Huff Roads, a truck routing plan, and improved parks and pedestrian facilities.

English Avenue Redevelopment Plan (1998) – The English Avenue Redevelopment plan emphasizes community-based initiatives that address comprehensive approaches to land use, housing, transportation, economic development, and public safety improvements. Goals include: to preserve residential integrity; to promote revitalization and increased homeownership; to improve the quality of retail options for the neighborhood; and to enhance public safety.